

Corruption in HE: Can QA make a difference?

- the case of Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education

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- What is corruption in HE?
- QA as a tool for preventing corruption in Higher Education – Agency for Science and Higher Education in Croatia – (ASHE) example
- Conclusion

Definition



- Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. (Transparency International)
- The systematic use of public office for private benefit whose impact on access, quality or equity in education is significant.
- Higher education is not immune to corruption.



Core elements of corruption in HE



Impacts of trends in HE to create motive and opportunity for corrupt practices:

- Governments **decrease funding in HE** – reflected in an erosion of salaries and conditions of service for academic staff
- Emphasis on HEIs to find **other sources of funding**
- Higher **placement in international rankings** – pressure to conduct research and publish in top journals
- Granted **greater administrative autonomy**
- Academics under greater job pressure but sometimes not enough oversight of their behavior.



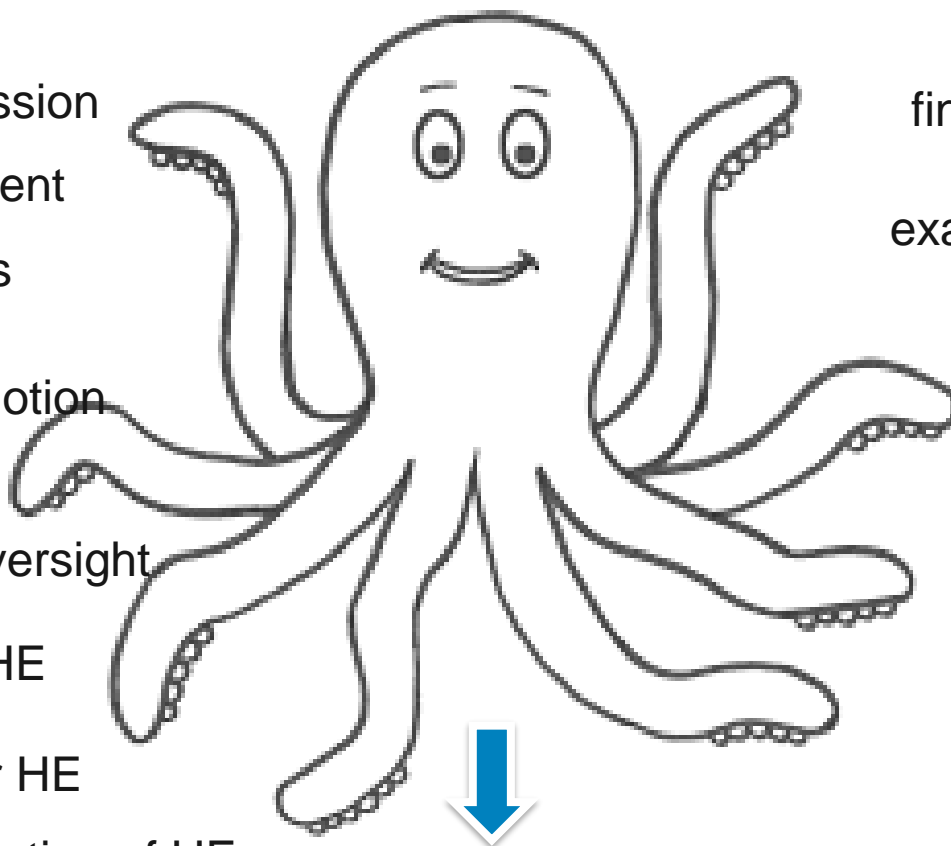
Corruption in HE includes the following aspects



Potential areas which are exposed to corrupt practices

Direct forms of corruption

student admission
student assessment
student dormitories application
recruitment and promotion of academics
job pressure – less oversight
new technologies in HE
cross-boarder HE
proliferation /privatization of HE



financial fraud
exam cheating
degree mills
plagiarism
teachers fail to meet their obligation towards students
accreditation mills

MOTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES



How to tackle the problem of corruption in HE?



An example of ASHE anti-corruption practices...



Croatian HE system



QA in Croatian HE system – the **responsibility of a single public Agency** – Agency for Science and Higher Education



- **10** universities (8 public and 2 private)
- **15** polytechnics (11 public and 4 private)
- **25** colleges (3 public, 22 private)
- 180,000 students



Croatian QA Agency (ASHE) – externally evaluated



- 2005 – ASHE establishment and beginning of development of QA model in line with the *Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)* using best international practices



- 2011 – externally evaluated – ENQA/EQAR membership/full compliance with ESG



- INQAAHE full membership





- 1. Quality Assurance activities in HE and Science**
2. Central Applications Office
3. National ENIC/NARIC office
4. Collecting and analyzing data on systems of science and higher education
5. Support for the work of various bodies
6. International cooperation





QA activities as a
reliable and consistent tool,
not only to prevent, but also to raise awareness of
corruption
in HE and Science ...

QA mechanisms that call for integrity are a road to awareness...



Sound regulatory framework



- State Matura
- Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (2009)
 - Re-accreditation mandatory for all public and private higher education institutions and carried out in five-year cycles
 - HEIs and study programmes which were not accredited are not allowed to carry out higher education activities/award higher education qualifications
- Act on the Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications





Ensures **transparency** and **impartiality** of enrolment procedure

- **Centralized application** to study programmes via the National Information System for Applications
- **Enrolment criteria – defined by HEIs**, predefined, publicly disclosed on the website on which students apply
- **Automatically generated** ranking lists (State Matura results + grades)
- HEI receives a **list of candidates** who qualified for enrolment, no entrance exams

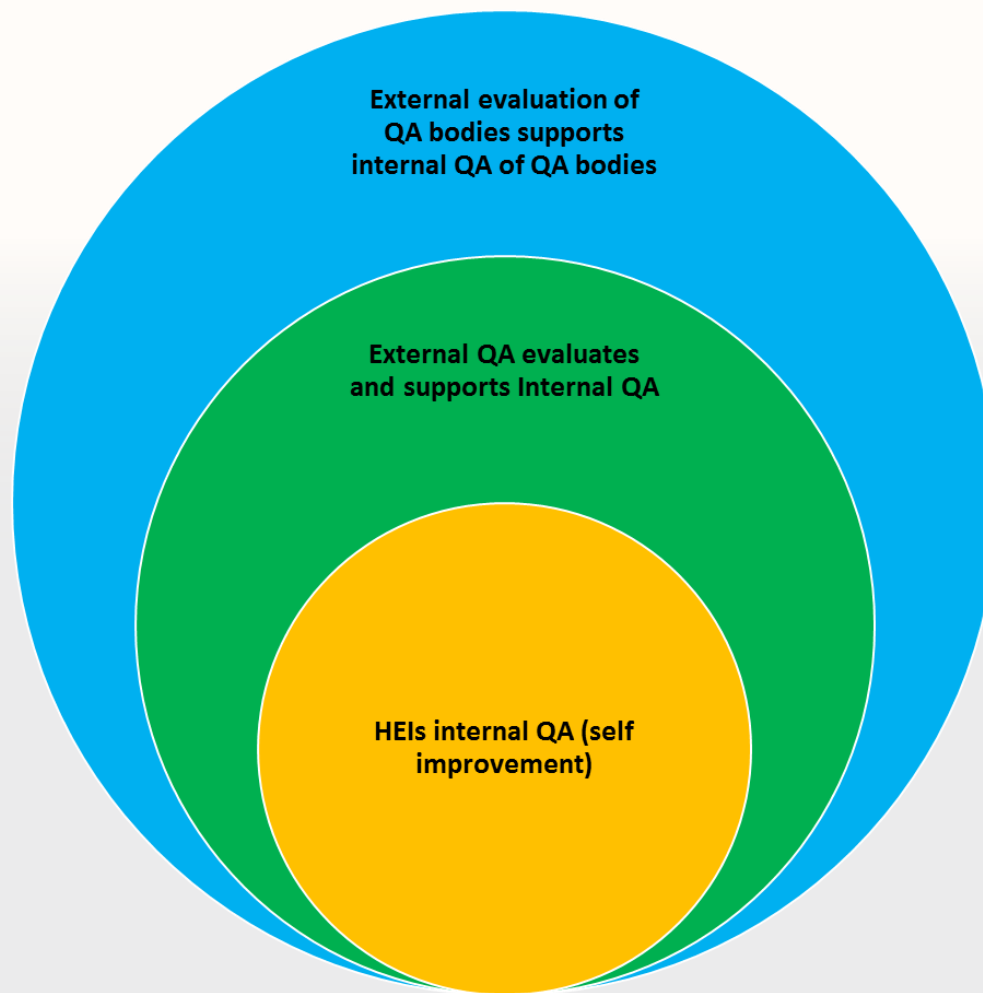
Clear and transparent re-accreditation standards



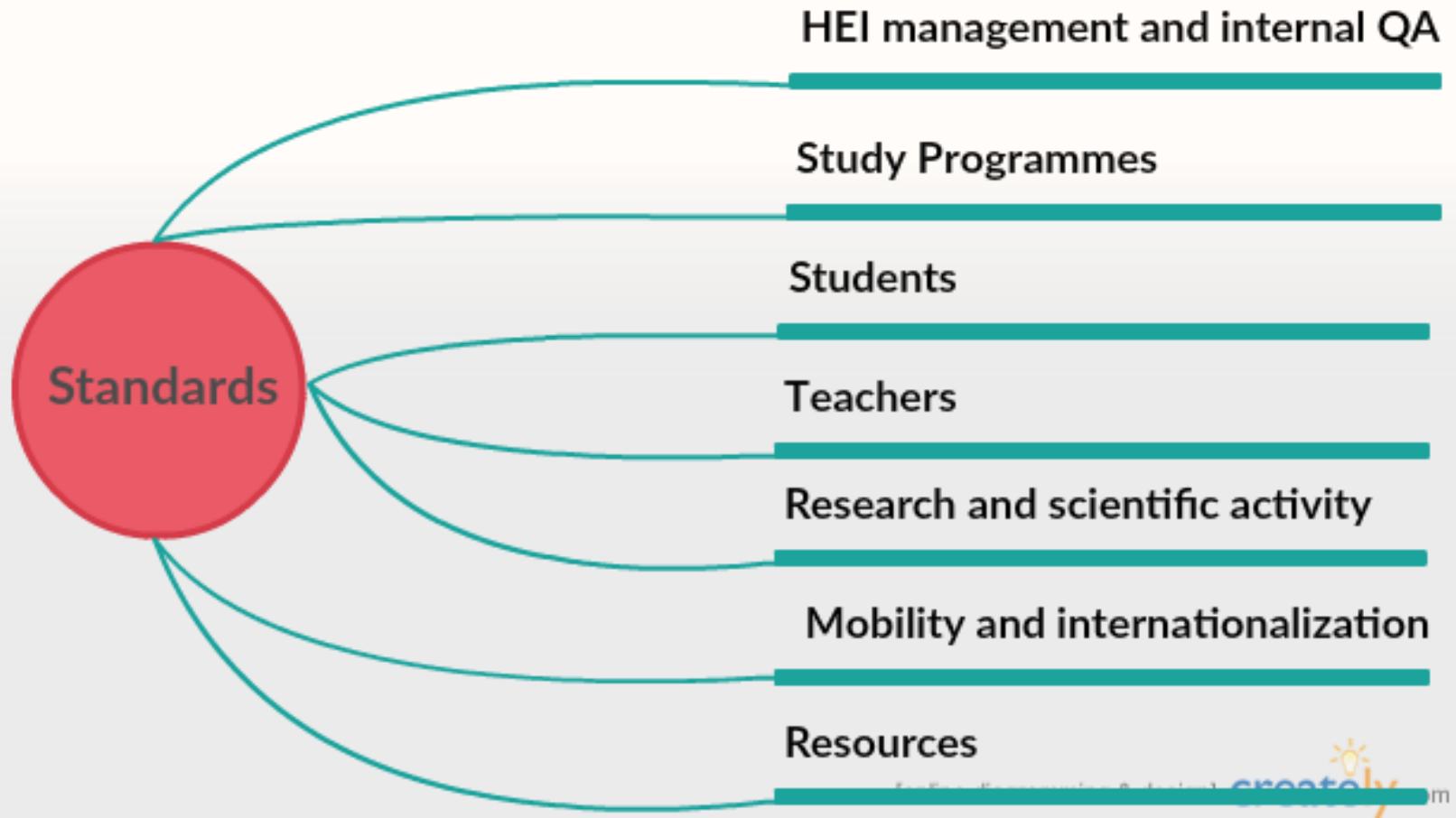
- **Stakeholder representatives** were involved in the development of standards
- Standards adopted by the **Accreditation Council**, ASHE's expert body comprising representatives of stakeholder groups
- **Publicly disclosed standards**
- **Guide with an explanation of each standard** to ensure consistency
- **Training of expert panels**
- **Active role of coordinators**
- **Consistency** of implementation and application



Synergy between internal and external QA



Standards cover various segments of HEI activities



Ethical behavior and academic integrity in revised ESG



- Having stakeholders involved in the management of HEI, the development of study programmes etc.
- Code of Ethics, Rules on disciplinary liability and procedures for solving unethical behavior
- Public disclosure of information, transparency
- Impartiality and consistency of assessment and the possibility of appeal
- Procedures and methods for the detection and prevention of plagiarism (software)
- Collecting feedback
- Student ombudsman
- Rules and procedures of teacher employment and advancement (public and international calls)
- Procedures and criteria for student enrolment





Stakeholders:

- participate in implementing changes and carrying out activities
- engaged in public discussion (standards and procedures)
- included in Management Board and Accreditation Council

- **NGO representative** is a member of the Accreditation Council
- **Confidentiality Statement** – ASHE staff
- **Code of Ethics** – Accreditation Council
- No gifts or paid meals from HEIs – written policy
- Feedback **surveys**

Employing various methods



- Raising motivation in stakeholders for fighting corruption
- Planned and unplanned talks with students and teachers
- Analyzing information received in confidential communication
- Analysing short written feedback on advantages and disadvantages of HEIs collected from students and assistants



Independent and impartial experts in the Expert panel



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PUBLIC DOCUMENTS



ASHE DOCUMENTS (STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES)



ACCREDITATION REPORTS AND DECISIONS



SUMMARIES OF THE REPORTS



ASHE ANNUAL REPORT



PERIODICAL NEWSLETTER



CANDIDATES CHOOSE AND APPLY TO THEIR STUDY PROGRAMMES



Other activities as a tool for preventing corruption in HE and Science





- Ensuring **relevance of data** on which decisions are based
- Collecting and analyzing data on HE and science
- Data contained in self-analysis documents, ASHE information systems, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport registers etc.



- **Preventing degree mills**
- Recognition of higher education degrees
- Providing information on national and foreign higher education systems, the number of accredited higher education institutions and programmes

Support for various bodies



- Support for the bodies in the appointment to grades – appointment/reappointment governed by law, in cycles, data on appointments to grades
- Ethics Committee in Science and Higher Education – preventing and sanctioning unethical behavior in academic community – national level (link with the work of ethics committees in HEIs)



Cooperation between ASHE and HEIs in preventing academic corruption



- Raising awareness of the importance of fight against corruption
- Encouraging internal QA
- Seminars, training, exchange of information
- Collecting and disclosing data, transparency
- Collecting feedback and carrying out activities for quality improvement



The integrative anti-corruption approach



- Legal reforms
- Administrative and civil reforms
- Educational public expenditures
- Financial management reforms
- Societal reforms

- Global QA: A standard for all? – UNESCO/OECD guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border HE
- Setting the EU bar: The Bologna process + ESG



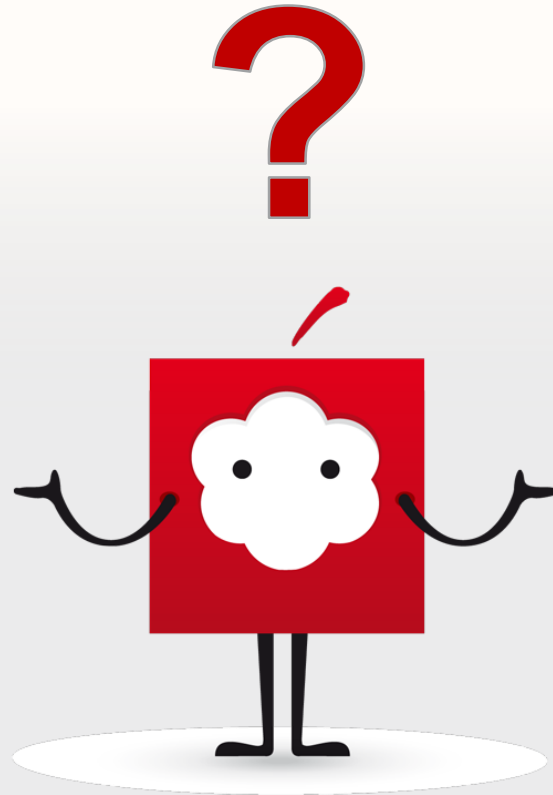
Recommendations to



- Governments
- Accreditation bodies
- HEIs
- Students and civil society



Thank you





Thank you for your attention!

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